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## U.S. RETALIATORY ABILITY STRESSED

**Pentagon Says Nation Can  
Survive Attack, Crush Foe**

By CHARLES W. CORDDRY  
(Washington Bureau of The Sun)

Washington, Nov. 8—The Defense Department estimated today that United States nuclear forces would survive a surprise Soviet attack on this country with enough destructive power to wipe out "almost half" the Soviet Union's population. This capability for retaliation will not change "significantly" in the future.

Under pressure of the current congressional inquiry into missile defenses and related strategic issues, the department released a statement defending its weapons policies against allegations that Moscow threatened to achieve "parity" or "superiority" at some future time.

### Reply To Hosmer

Specifically, Paul H. Nitze, Deputy Secretary of Defense, replied to claims made by Representative Hosmer (R., Cal.) Monday at the opening of hearings by the Military Applications subcommittee of the Joint Congressional Atomic Energy Committee.

Hosmer had foreseen a time, perhaps not far distant, when the Russians might believe themselves capable of destroying enough of the American nuclear forces in a surprise strike to make the risk worth taking.

He consequently urged an expansion of the American intercontinental missile force, construction of an anti-ballistic missile system for defense against Soviet attack and prolongation of the life of certain B-52 and B-58 bombers scheduled to be retired.

### Hears Secret Briefing

While Nitze's reply, hewing to present policy and contesting Hosmer's nuclear-age arithmetic, was being submitted for its records, the subcommittee today heard a secret briefing from Richard Helms, Director of Central Intelligence.

Senator Jackson (D., Wash.), panel chairman, described Helms's recital as "sobering."

From the Central Intelligence Agency's assessments, Jackson concluded that the Soviet Union clearly "is determined to beat us in the area of strategic offensive and defensive weapons" and also is "moving very rapidly" to improve its other military forces.

"There is no room for complacency," Jackson said, though he expected on the basis of Pentagon testimony that America will "take whatever steps are necessary" to retain its ability to deter war.

It was just this point to which Nitze's statement today was addressed.

He said Hosmer had implied that the United States might be unable to hold its current "second-strike capability," that is, its ability to absorb a Russian attack, survive and destroy the Soviet society.

Nitze said the Soviets presently "could put less than 500 reliable ICBM's over the United States, each carrying one weapon." He asserted that, contrary to Hosmer's claims, Soviet nuclear warheads average less than half the 10 to 30 megatons cited by the congressman.

### Would Destroy 100

Such a Soviet attack would destroy approximately 100 of America's 1,000 Minuteman intercontinental missiles, which are mounted in underground launch sites, Nitze said.

"This would leave almost the entire Minuteman force, as well as our alert bombers and sea-based missiles to attack the Soviet Union in retaliation," Nitze said. "The more than 2,000 surviving, alert weapons could destroy almost half the population of the Soviet Union."

Looking at least to 1973, Nitze said the situation would not change significantly.

At that time, the United States will have added multiple warheads to its Minuteman missiles and will have its Poseidon program "well along." Poseidon is a very powerful new missile, capable of carrying many nuclear warheads, that is scheduled to replace a portion of the present force of Polaris missiles, carried in nuclear-powered submarines.

### "Unacceptable Damage"

In the 1970's period thus considered, Nitze said, the United States will be able to dispatch "thousands" of nuclear warheads, decoys and other penetration aids—all capable of overwhelming a Soviet defense against missiles.

Noting that the American strategic force had three elements—land-based missiles, submarine-based missiles and bomber aircraft — Nitze said that, even should the Russians be able to incapacitate any two of these, the third could inflict "unacceptable damage."